

## Message Text

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11  
ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 SR-02 ORM-01 ITF-05 AID-05

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /078 W  
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P 210433Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9948  
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY  
USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: SREF VN MY  
SUBJ: INDOCHINA REFUGEES

REF: KL 2779

1. SUMMARY: REPORTS OF VIETNAMESE AND CAMBODIAN REFUGEES IN MALAYSIA HERETOFORE STRIKINGLY ABSENT FROM LOCAL, SEMI-CONTROLLED PRESS, BEGAN APPEARING IN NEWSPAPERS MAY 20 AND MAY 21. THESE COULD HERALD SOME GOM DECISION ON STATUS OF REFUGEES. END SUMMARY.

2. FIRST MENTION IN SOME DAYS OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES CONCENTRATED ON PULAU PERHENTIAN AND KHMER CHAM REFUGEES TAKEN INTO KELANTAN APPEARED HERE MAY 20-21. MALAYSIAN-LANGUAGE AFFILIATE OF GOVT-OWNED "NEW STRAITS TIMES" (NST), "BERITA HARIAN", CARRIED FRONTPAGE STORY MAY 20 SOURCED TO UNNAMED FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN WHO ACKNOWLEDGED UNHCR HAS REQUESTED GOM HELP IN CARING FOR REFUGEES. ACCORDING TO MFA SOURCE, GOM IS CURRENTLY CONSIDERING WHETHER TO RETURN REFUGEES TO VIETNAM, HELP THEM GO TO OTHER COUNTRIES, OR TO ACCEPT SOME AS RESIDENTS,  
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BUT DECISION NOT YET TAKEN.

3. NST MAY 21 PICKED UP "BERITA" STORY AND COUPLED IT WITH STATEMENT SOLICITED FROM THIS EMBASSY REGARDING REQUESTS FOR ASYLUM FROM CAMBODIAN AND VIETNAMESE DIPLOMATS HERE. NST ACCURATELY REPORTED THAT EMBASSY HAD ADVISED DIPLOMATS TO APPROACH GOM, UNHCR AND ICEM FOR RESETTLEMENT ASSISTANCE. WE ALSO REPORTED AS NOTING THAT USG IS WORKING CLOSELY WITH LATTER ORGANIZATIONS "AND HOPES OTHER GOVTS WILL DO SO TOO."

4. NATIONAL BERNAMA NEWS AGENCY CARRIED COMPREHENSIVE STORY MAY 20 ON REFUGEE SITUATION WHICH UNTIL NOW PICKED UP ONLY BY PENANG "STAR" MAY 21. REPORT STATES GOM CURRENTLY LOOKING AFTER 1,241 VIETNAMESE ON PULAU PERHENTIAN "WHO ARE IN TRANSIT BEFORE DEPARTING FOR DESTINATIONS OF THEIR CHOICE." GOM AUTHORITIES, COORDINATED BY NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL, ARE CONDUCTING "EXERCISE" TO LEARN FROM REFUGEES WHETHER THEY WISH TO RETURN TO VIETNAM OR GO TO OTHER DESTINATIONS IN WHICH CASE "MALAYSIA WOULD MAKE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS." THUS FAR, AUTHORITIES HAVE FOUND NO POTENTIAL RETURNEES AND ALL QUESTIONED WISH GO TO U.S. IN ADDITION, REPORT STATED 103 KHMER CHAM (CAMBODIAN MUSLIMS) ARRIVED IN THE STATE OF KELANTAN MAY 17 FROM THAILAND IN BUSES CHARTERED BY THE MALAYSIAN EMBASSY IN BANGKOK WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE THAI GOVT AND THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS. THEY JOINED A REPORTED 170 OTHER KHMER CHAMS WHO HAD BEEN ADMITTED TO KELANTAN EARLIER AND ARE STAYING WITH FRIENDS AND RELATIVES OR TAKEN CARE OF BY THE STATE GOVT.

5. PENANG "STAR" IN RAMBLING EDITORIAL AIMED LARGELY AT SINGAPORE BUT WITH APPLICATION TO MALAYSIA COMMENTED MAY 20 THAT "THE PROBLEM OF DEALING WITH THE REFUGEES, WHO SEEM TO BELONG TO THE SIDE OF THE VANQUISHED, IS MADE DIFFICULT ONLY BECAUSE THE AUTHORITIES CONCERNED HAVE ALLOWED (THEIR) HUMANITARIAN INSTINCTS TO BE SMOTHERED BY (A) CRINGING FEAR OF THE VICTORS...WHEN MATTERS REACHED SUCH A STATE THEN IT'S TIME FOR ALL THE PEOPLE INCLUDING THE LEADERS TO HANG DOWN THEIR HEADS IN SHAME."

6. COMMENT: THE REFUGEES ON PULAU PERHENTIAN HAVE NOW BEEN THERE FOR THREE WEEKS AND GOM HAS NOT SUCCEEDED IN WISHING THEM AWAY. FURTHERMORE, VISIT OF UNHCR REP AND PETITION TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PRIME MINISTER BY LEADERS ON ISLAND HAVE FORCED ATTENTION TO THEIR SITUATION. GOM IS ACUTELY AWARE THAT ITS POLICY OF ADMITTING KHMER CHAM MUSLIMS AND SEEKING TO RID ITSELF OF VIETNAMESE BUDDHISTS AND CHRISTIANS COULD RESULT IN ADVERSE INTERNATIONAL PUBLICITY OF A TYPE IT DOES NOT SEEK, THEREFORE IT HAS OBVIOUSLY TRIED TO KEEP NEWS OF THIS SITUATION UNDER CONTROL. THE NEWS APPEARS TO BE OUT NOW, HOWEVER, WHICH MAY BE A PRELUDE TO SOME ACTION. EMBASSY HAS REQUESTED MEET-

ING WITH MFA AND OTHER OFFICIALS REGARDING GOM INTENTIONS.  
UNDERHILL

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